

Arius and Athanasius

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they might look forward with confidence to gaining the entire court over to their side and still further consolidating their position in the East. Arius returned in triumph to Alexandria, where he had not set foot for many years. But his presence was the signal for renewed popular disturbance. The Catholics remained faithful to their Bishop in exile—St. Antony repeatedly wrote to Constantino, praying for Athanasius* recall—and Alexandria was in tumult, Constantino refused to reconsider the sentence of banishment on Athanasius, but he checked the violence of the Meletian schismatics by banishing John Arcaph from Alexandria, and he hurriedly recalled Arius to Constantinople. The horcsiarch was summoned into the presence of the Emperor, who by this time was once more uneasy in his mind—Constantino asked him point blank whether he held the Faith of the Catholic Church, ⁴*Can I trust you ? " he said ; "are you really of the true Faith?" Arius solemnly affirmed that he was and recited his profession of belief. " Have you abjured the errors you used to hold in Alexandria?" continued the Emperor; ** will you swear it before God?" Arius took the required oath, and the Emperor was satisfied. "Go," said he, "and if your Faith be not sound, may God punish you for your perjury."

This strange scene is described by Athanasius himself, who had been told the details by an eyewitness, a priest called Macarius. According to Soc« rates, Arius subscribed the declaration of the Faith **in** Constantino's presence, and the historian goes on